

Megiddo Message

DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST

Divine Intolerance

HIGHER GROUND AND SAFETY

WORKING OR WAITING

LIVING AN EXCHANGED LIFE

SIN—ITS BEGINNING AND ENDING

MEDITATIONS ON THE WORD

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

AN EVENING REVERIE

Megiddo Message

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Kenneth E. Flowerday, Editor

A religious magazine, devoted to the cause of Christ and published for the dissemination of Bible truth alone. The MEGIDDO MESSAGE will

- Strengthen your faith in the Bible
- Answer perplexing religious questions
- Give you courage for these uncertain times
- Help you live above the world's moral corruption
- Reveal to you how to develop a character acceptable to God
- Bring peace and stability to your life

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LETTERS

A Portent

Dear Sister:

As we look out upon the trouble and turmoil in the world today we are impressed with the vast amount of fulfilled prophecy which tells us in no uncertain tones that the return of Christ, our future King, is near at hand, yea, even at the door. We see the conflict between capital and labor, and the cry of peace is sounded even as nations are preparing for war. These signs should make our faith grow exceedingly and spur us on to free ourselves from all evil.

If we should see a great tornado coming, whirling and tumbling along, utterly destroying everything in its path and reaching heavenward in its strength, would we not flee quickly to get to a place of safety? We would be most foolish if we did not.

We know there is a great storm coming now, a great destruction that cometh as a whirlwind. We can hear the rumble of thunder, growing louder each day. We must hasten to get into the strong tower, the only safe place, for the time is short, and unless we run rapidly we shall be as thistledown before the great "whirlwind of the Lord."

Elgin, Oregon

Mrs. J. G.

Return of Thanks

Dear Friends:

I'm taking this opportunity now to thank you very much for a copy of *The Coming of Jesus and Elijah*. The book was very interesting as I've been told John the Baptist was Elijah but could never believe it. I have read in the Bible where John said he was not Elijah and I'm looking for Elijah as Bible states in Malachi 4: 5.

Peoria, Ill.

Mrs. B. C.

A Word of Thankfulness

Dear Sister:

I look forward to the Maranatha letters very much indeed, and am so grateful for them as one cannot be reminded too often of the short time we might have left of this day of salvation in which to conquer selves. The night cometh when no man can work—too late then, and too far away for the bugle call to reach us.

Swansea, S. Wales, Eng.

R. B.

Expression of Satisfaction

Gentlemen:

Please renew my subscriptions for one year to both the Bible Lessons and MEGIDDO MESSAGE.

These publications mean a great deal to me and hope never to be without them. Read every word of each copy. It was particularly gratifying to note letter from teenager in last issue of MESSAGE. What a wonderful opportunity to learn real Truth early in life!

Asheville, N. C.

V. B. G.

Divine Intolerance

A PASTOR of a city church preached a sermon entitled, "The Bland Leading the Bland." During the week that this announcement was on the church bulletin board a bright young student stopped the minister in front of the church one day to inform him that someone had misspelled. She thought the "bland" should be "blind." But the minister was pained to inform her that the words were spelled correctly.

In his sermon the minister quoted an excerpt from Arthur Schlesinger Jr., Harvard historian, to the effect: "The greatest threat to American liberty today comes not from outer coercion but from inner weakness . . . The greatest danger . . . is less from the people who do not want others to be free than from the people who do not want to be free themselves, who feel themselves rendered guilty by deviation and threatened by dissent, whose whole aspiration is to merge their identity with the group."

"What liberalism must resist is the tendency to turn America into one great and genuinely benevolent company town—the bland leading the bland. It must oppose the drift into the homogenized society."

We may not all realize what the word "bland" implies. It means: "gentle or agreeable; soothing or balmy, as air; nonirritating; nonstimulating; soft; mild." "But it is possible to carry gentleness and agreeableness to an extreme. In the religious world today the nonirritating and the nonstimulating are leading the nonirritating and the nonstimulating. They have a sense of panic when they stand out from the group. They are desperately afraid of their own individuality, their own distinctiveness."

This is not God's way, who declared through Isaiah: "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins" (Isa. 58: 1). The mighty prophets of Israel: Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, and Jesus, were sent by God periodically to shake the people from their languor and lethargy, to stab them with the truths of their individual responsibility before God.

To be Christians we must be godlike, and divine intolerance leaves no place for a wishy-washy attitude toward what is right or what is wrong.

Indignation—A Lost Art

I have the report of a lecture given recently, bearing on the same theme, entitled: "The Lost Art of Indignation." The speaker said: "The Psalmist once wrote: 'God is a righteous judge, and a God who has indignation every day'" (Ps. 7: 11, R. S. V.). The speaker continued, "What then constitutes righteous indignation? Can there be a love of justice without a flaming hatred of injustice? How deep is our love of freedom if we have no indignation at prison camps, slave labor, serfdom?" We may make the claim that we love the true, the righteous, and the good, but if there is no limit to our tolerance with the social evils of our time, with the glaring godlessness

in our friends or associates, or the infidelity toward God that resides in our own hearts, we are not godlike, we have lost the art of righteous indignation.

Righteous Lot was vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked. He didn't allow his close association with the people of Sodom to dull his recognition of their evil practices. A rebirth of indignation is imperative among us. A great English moralist of the 19th century once said: "There is one thing worse than corruption, and that is acquiescence in corruption."

We must face the fact that there is a true image of the Christian faith in righteous displeasure. Christianity should also be known for its love and forgiveness. However sinful a person has been, if he repents, the Lord will receive him, for "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." But Christianity should also be known for its indignation. The church will have foes as well as friends. "Woe unto you when all men speak well of you," said Jesus.

The speaker continued: "The prime indignity the world and [pretended] Christians have done to the church and Christianity is to take away from it its indignation. As an editorial in the *Christian Century* put it: 'Christianity no longer pokes its prophetic nose into injustice.' As we hear on all sides now, 'the rescue station has become a comfort station. The church lives and lets live. It is domesticated. It gives no one any trouble. No more does it bark the wild alarm. It drags in no sordid messes from the outside to outrage us. It is very careful not to muss the conventional broadloom of our conforming lives.'"

An observer has given this description of the nominal Church: "A mild mannered gentleman trying to persuade a docile company of people to be still more docile." Such is *not* the church of Jesus Christ who said to the people gathered before Him—speaking of the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices, or the eighteen men upon whom the tower of Siloam had fallen and crushed them to death—"think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay; but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 14: 3). Or again: "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5: 20).

Too often the religious world's image of the Christ is "Gentle Jesus meek and mild," and "God is sugar and spice and everything nice." But that is not the picture provided by the Bible. God is love, but He also has divine intolerance. There is a limit to His endurance with the vessels of wrath fitted only to destruction. Paul's words in Rom. 11: 22 strike like an arrow to the mark: "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness; otherwise thou also shalt be cut off."

Scripture texts revealing God's divine displeasure could be adduced almost endlessly. It was shown in the destruction by flood in the time of Noah; it was revealed in the

destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah by fire; in the overthrow of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, in the straitened circumstances that befell Israel during the days of the Judges each time that they forgot God. It was shown in the eventual destruction of Jerusalem in A. D. 70.

Intolerance—Judgment to Come

Divine intolerance is foreshown as a major factor in God's great work upon earth at Jesus' second coming. "But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matt. 24: 37—39). "Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed" (Luke 17: 28—30).

A few years ago Winston Churchill of England, speaking of the way in which the entire foundation of human affairs has been revolutionized by the hideous power which science has placed in the hands of men, asked, What if God "wearied of mankind?" It is true that God has wearied of an element of mankind. He is so displeased with the wicked and their devices that He will not always tolerate them, or allow mankind to perpetually desecrate His fair earth by their misbehavior as they have been doing from the beginning of history.

The statement in Malachi 4: 1 is forthright, and too clear to be misunderstood: "For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch."

Isaiah 60: 12 runs in a similar vein: "For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted." And the extent of this sweeping holocaust is revealed in Zech. 13: 8: "And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein." Divine tolerance shall have reached its limit; the word to the seething "sea" of mankind will then be, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed" (Job 38: 11).

The Eternal has been exceedingly longsuffering with mankind. They have misused His property, they have desecrated the earth, the use of which He loaned to them. They have fought one another, they have stolen, they have plundered, they have murdered, they have been selfish, and indifferent to the welfare of others. They have turned a deaf ear to His loving call, they have refused to study His Word. They have taken His holy name in vain, and lived their lives in a manner so unbecoming as to render them ineligible for adoption into His heavenly family. But a day will come when the situation will be reversed.

Another of Paul's declarations in II Thess. 1: 6—8, shows how conscious he was of God's divine intolerance: "Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense

tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." These words indicate much more than a mild rebuke, or unlimited tolerance.

Christ—His Vials of Wrath

The religious world are wholly imbued with the idea that Christ is all love, that no judgments of any kind will ever be any part of His official activities, or that He will permit anyone to be cursed in the day when He comes as King. Let us see. Now the book of Revelation was written after Jesus had been in heaven a number of years. And we read in Chap. 16: 1: "And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth." The first of these angels is represented as pouring his vial upon the earth; the second poured his vial upon the sea; the third angel poured his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters. The fourth angel poured his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire; the fifth angel poured his vial upon the seat of the "beast," the powers of religious darkness; and the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates, drying it up; and the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air. "And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon earth" (Rev. 16: 18). These are vivid symbols of God's judgments which shall come upon men as the result of His divine intolerance for their misbehavior. There will be an earthquake, a great convulsion of the earth's affairs, such as there was not since men were upon earth. It will be the time of which Daniel spoke, when "Michael" the "great prince," Christ, shall "stand up, . . . and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time" (12: 1).

Ezekiel—Divine Intolerance

And we should do well to consider the broad scope of divine intolerance, to picture the possibility that we ourselves, as avowed servants of the true and living God, should, in the Day of Final Account, merit His judicial displeasure. In our Scripture lesson, Ezekiel 9, this situation is depicted.

Ezekiel was the priest of the Captivity. As he was among the captives by the river Chebar in Chaldea, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw visions of God.

One part of Ezekiel's vision is recorded in chapter 9. In chapter 8 his heavenly informer brought him in vision to the temple at Jerusalem. He showed him what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery, and they were saying, much the same as people say today, "The Lord seeth us not; the Lord hath forsaken the earth." He was then shown yet more abominations, and repulsive practices.

Then in chapter 9 the angel cried in Ezekiel's ears with a loud voice, saying, "Cause them that have charge over the city to draw near, every man with his destroying weapon in his hand. And, behold, six men came from the

way of the higher gate, which lieth toward the north, and every man a slaughter weapon in his hand; and one man among them was clothed with linen, with a writer's inkhorn by his side: and they went in, and stood beside the brasen altar. And the glory of the God of Israel was gone up from the cherub, whereupon he was, to the threshold of the house. And he called to the man clothed with linen, which had the writer's inkhorn by his side; and the Lord said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof" (vs. 1-4).

Now we have come to the high point of this vision, the type of activity on our part which aligns us with God, and that demonstrates that His tastes are our tastes, His mind our mind.

God possesses divine intolerance.

He cannot look upon evil with any degree of allowance, and He asks the same of us. The man clothed in linen with the writer's inkhorn was commanded to set a mark upon each of the inhabitants of Jerusalem who would sigh and cry for the abominations committed in the land. God wants us to be concerned and troubled about the abominations committed in the land. Yet by being concerned we cannot change the world; we cannot change the ways of the covenantbreakers among the members of the church of God, but we can keep their evil ways from influencing us. It is our duty to live above the world, to be in the world but not of it. But complacency will never accomplish this end. We may be the bland led by the bland, but that can never make of us an alert, zealous Christian, on fire for God and righteousness.

Amos 3: 6 using the wording in the marginal reference, reads: "Shall there be evil in a city, and shall not the Lord do somewhat?" Indeed He will do somewhat, for He "will early destroy all the wicked of the land." That part of the program is not our province, the command to us is, "Do violence to no man"; but we dare not be complacent about the evil that we see all around us. And if upon examination or close scrutiny we find some evil in ourselves, then let us get busy and banish it. Let us purify ourselves even as Christ is pure. Unless we "sigh and cry for all the abominations" committed by the wicked, we shall never be clothed in the white linen, nor be able to help write the laws that will direct the favored inhabitants of the thousand-year reign of Christ on the earth.

We should observe that the mark was placed on the men who sighed and cried for *all* the abominations committed in the land. It will not suffice for us to cry for some of the abominations committed, and complacently overlook the rest, but every one of these abominations must be a cause of distress to us. We are commanded to love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. But if we hate some forms of worldliness and heartily condone other forms which are equally displeasing to God, we shall never be a part of the one man with the inkhorn by his side.

Christian Intolerance of Worldliness

The command is, "Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." And that takes in every aspect of the world and worldliness.

We must not love their ways, their manner of speech, their way of mispending their time, their dress, or demeanor. It all comes under the head of worldliness, and does not befit the Christian. If we are really mourning, it will impel us to recognize these misdeeds that are an abomination to God, and purify ourselves from them. But if not holy, we will be a part of the number to go forth with battle-ax in hand to destroy and be destroyed. Let us remember, we must not only abhor and forsake all our own iniquity, but must do it willingly, gladly, cheerfully; if from this time forward we do this, we shall be accepted. How we should rejoice that God's saving truth is to be found in the midst of the city of evil now, and there are a few who are willing to cry and sigh, and abhor all iniquity.

The command was to "set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done." That will be a mark of distinction, a mark of approval. But there are two aspects to this mark. Those lacking the stamp of approval will in effect be marked with the mark of Cain. The absence of the mark of approval will reveal that they are marked for destruction. The blank or unmarked forehead is the mark of Cain, the unfaithful, and is for the purpose of keeping him from being slain until he has been convinced of all his iniquities, and has accomplished his work as the six men to go forth and slay. As covenant-makers we will constitute either the hay, wood and stubble; or be the gold, tried as by fire. It would seem that we would want to be of the latter, and would show it by our works.

Let us repeat, there are two classes, and two marks. There is a vast difference in these two marks and their purpose. The faithful will have the Father's name in their foreheads, and cannot be slain nor hurt through eternity. What a blessed thought that we can have this mark upon us. And not only can we have it upon our foreheads now, but can be putting it on the foreheads of others during the Millennium, and the great eternity beyond.

God does not save an individual, even though he be partly good (for a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump, Gal. 5: 9); if you are not good in everything, He will not spare. We too must cry aloud and spare not. We must not spare evil whether in ourselves or others. Divine intolerance will not allow God to call even a small amount of evil, good. Each shall reap exactly as he has sown.

MEDITATIONS ON THE WORD

(Continued from page 10)

There is another mirror, or possibly we should say another face to the same glass, which is crystal clear, with no trace of distortion or shadow. This is the Mirror of Truth, the "perfect law of liberty" (James 1: 23-25), in which we can see our natural condition and daily check our progress toward perfection. This glass is for our personal use, within our present range and focus, and to it we should constantly refer, not attempting to conceal or disguise, but honestly accepting its verdicts and acting thereupon.

An intelligent man is very much concerned about the future because that's where he's going to spend the rest of his life.

Higher Ground and Safety

A STORY is told of a Chinese farmer, who, standing on his high land during an earthquake, saw the sea receding from the shore. Knowing it would return in a tidal wave and inundate the lowlands where his friends lived, he set fire to his fields, and then rang the alarm. His neighbors came rushing up the hills to help him, and in so doing saved their lives.

This is only one of many scenes of heroic service and sacrifice which have been enacted upon the stage of human history for the purpose of saving life. To the majority of mankind, life is precious. "All that a man hath will he give for his life," said a wise philosopher many centuries ago.

As the friends of the farmer saved their lives by leaving the lowlands and climbing to higher ground, so everyone who aspires to be worthy of a life that will never end, must flee from the danger-threatened lowlands of sin and iniquity and climb to higher ground and safety.

The Scriptures cite many prophecies of a time when there will be a great earthquake, and the tidal waves of God's judgments will inundate the lowlands and sweep away the great city of Babylon which is located there. The prophet Haggai declares "For thus saith the Lord of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come."

"The great day of the Lord is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly." A day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, says the prophet Zephaniah.

We hear the trumpet sounding out an alarm through the words of the prophet Jeremiah, "Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul: be not cut off in her iniquity." Jesus echoes the same warning, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."

The prophet Isaiah sounds out a loving invitation and a warning to seek a place of safety, "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold, the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity." The prophet Daniel foretold that this will be "a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time." We are living now in an age when men's hearts are failing them for fear. The tremors that precede the great upheaval which will rend the foundations of wickedness are becoming more and more apparent. But shining over against the dark clouds of trouble, is a rainbow-of-promises of a glorious future. In glowing terms the prophets describe the completeness of the victory over evil.

There will be nothing to "hurt nor destroy" throughout the length and breadth of God's dominion.

The prophet Malachi describes the destruction of the

wicked and the gathering of God's people as jewels into His Kingdom.

A challenge is given us in the words of the Wise Man, "Forsake the foolish and live, and go in the way of understanding." This is the way our great Benefactor has provided for us to reach higher ground and safety. The travelers in this way of understanding must depart from all evil, for this way leads to a land far above the foolish ways of the world. To a land where no one will be forced to see evil any more. In this glory-land they shall obtain joy and gladness and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. The splendors of this coming Kingdom will surpass men's highest thoughts, they will exceed his most extended imaginings.

Down through the ages God had been calling to the children of men to come into this way of holiness which will lead to this haven of rest and safety far above the clamor and confusion of the world. But only a few have hearkened to the call. Only a few can be aroused to realize the vanity of earthly things and like the great apostle Paul, captured by the hope of eternal life, press on in God's appointed way.

These will be the jewels, that will be gathered into the Kingdom. And they will spend their days in prosperity and their years in pleasures throughout the endless cycles of eternity.

A Place For Those in Distress

Psalm Twelve

Help, Lord, because the godly man
Doth daily fade away;
And from among the sons of men
The faithful do decay.
Unto his neighbor ev'ry one
Doth utter vanity;
They with a double heart do speak,
And lips of flattery.

God shall cut off all flatt'ring lips,
Tongues that speak proudly, thus,
"We'll with our tongues prevail, our lips
Are ours: who's lord o'er us?"
For poor oppress'ed, and for the sighs
Of needy, rise will I,
Saith God, and him in safety set
From such as him defy.

The words of God are words most pure;
They be like silver tried
In earthen furnace, seven times,
That hath been purified.
Lord, Thou shalt them preserve and keep
Forever from this race.
On each side walk the wicked, when
Vile men are high in place.



"Poor is the man who can boast of nothing more than gold."

Working or Waiting

THE INSISTENT ringing of the telephone caught the ear of Mrs. Swift and she motioned for her daughter Joy to shut off the vacuum cleaner while she answered. When she returned, it was apparent that she was laboring under mixed emotions as she explained to Joy:

"It was your Aunt Perception; she and Uncle Keen will be in on the 3:45 to stay a week! Why, oh, why could they not have waited until *next* week!"

"But why next week, Mother?" queried Joy. "Have you not been wishing for a long time that you could see your sister?"

"True," replied Mrs. Swift, "but the house is a mess! They both are particular. A little dirt drives them frantic."

"I still cannot see what difference a week would make, Mother. We always try to keep clean and I am sure that if we get real busy, we can get everything tidied up, with time to spare." Without waiting for an answer to that bit of logic, Joy again started the cleaner and went to work in earnest.

With Mrs. Swift's following her energetic daughter's example, they went from room to room, cleaning, dusting, polishing, and true to Joy's prediction, by 3 o'clock everything was shipshape and they were both busily engaged in preparing salad and dessert for the evening meal, ready to receive, and anxiously waiting for the arrival of the expected guests.

We, too, are expecting a Guest, a distinguished Guest, a very particular Guest, in the very near future. Are we going to be found working, or waiting when He comes? We *try* to keep clean, but there are so many corners in our spiritual house where dirt can collect undetected, unless we are on the job every moment. Any dirt, no matter how small a speck, is so distasteful to our expected Guest that He positively will not enter and sup with us if it is present.

We have been warned that to some, His coming will be "as a thief in the night," urging us on with these words:

"Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockrowing, or in the morning: lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch" (Mark 13: 35-37).

Let us not be of the number who now say, "Time enough yet," or we will one day cry out with remorse, "Why could He not wait till *next* week," knowing full well, as did Joy, that another week would have made no difference. Instead, let us follow the example of the Swifts, and get down in greater earnestness, *now* removing every speck of dirt, whether it be jealousy, anger, impatience, selfishness, or any other besetment out of our spiritual house, out into the field, out of the country. Let us put our house in order *now*, so we will be found waiting when He comes, ready to receive our honored Guest. For only those ready and waiting will be acknowledged by Him.

When you consider how hard it is to change yourself, you understand how little chance you have in trying to change others.

Faith

Faith is the anchor of our hope wherever we may roam
And, like a lifebuoy, bears us up above the tossing foam.
Faith doth no disappointment bring, no causes for regret;
It makes us to rejoice and sing, and every care forget.

Faith on the mountain top will bloom, and in the desert
drear;

It doth its strings of gladness tune when none but God is near.
Faith cannot sink, whatever weight or pressure is applied,
Because from God it emanates, a gift that doth abide.

What power can measure Daniel's faith when in the lion's
den?

He knew that God would keep him safe, whatever might
condemn.

Faith is the rod by which we're tried, Hope the immortal
crown

For those who in the Truth abide, the evil life lay down.

And Charity shall crown the whole with her eternal light,
And all the universe control in equity and right.

Words cannot tell what faith hath done; Eternity will show
The crowns of victory Faith hath won by her unerring glow.

The Christian religion is more than a pleasant state of mind. It is solidly anchored in the Person and life of our Lord Jesus Christ, and He stands for something more than an amiable disposition. If He had been content to talk about sacrifices, it would have been interesting. When He learned obedience by the things which He suffered, did always those things which pleased His heavenly Father, took up His cross of self-denial even to the point of surrendering to the death on the cross, His daily sacrifice became a fact, leading to a definite goal.

If He had stopped with a discussion of immortality and a statement of fact regarding death beyond the grave it would have been inspiring. When He rose from the dead it became real, He became the firstfruits from the dead, providing a marching song for all who like Him are willing to take up their cross daily and follow in His footsteps of perfect obedience.

HURRY the HARVEST

*Harvest bitter words that rise in fury.
Gather up each one intact, unbroken.
Tie them tightly. Then, all safely bundled,
Confiscate the lot-unheard, unspoken.*

Jesus gave His entire attention to His main purpose. He was concerned with the opportunity to do his Father's will. Too often in a crisis we look backward. This is like homesickness for what has been left behind. It will gain us little or nothing. We pass through defeat to victory when we move forward with our face set toward the prize. Describing his way of running to win the Christian race, Paul says first—"this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before; I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

Living an Exchanged Life

A RELIGIOUS editor recently employed the above caption for his editorial. As he applied his caption, he led his readers to believe that the Christian lives an exchanged life in the respect that upon conversion, with no effort on his part, the old life is taken away from him, and a new life is given in its place.

Voicing the popular theological viewpoint, he states: "At the foundation of the Christian life lies vicarious atonement, which in essence is a transfer of guilt from the sinner to the Saviour. I well know how vigorously this idea is attacked by non-Christians, but I also know that the wise of this world in their pride often miss the treasures which the simplehearted find on their knees; and I also remember the words of the apostle, 'For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him' (II Cor. 5: 21). . . Christ by His death on the cross made it possible for the sinner to exchange his sin for Christ's righteousness. It's that simple."

After listing the exchanges from worse to better that occur in the life of the active Christian, and indicating that they are more or less automatic and effortless to the man accepting Christ as his personal Savior, the author makes a broad statement which we challenge. We quote: "Man is a born cobbler. When he wants a thing to be better he goes to work to improve it. He improves cattle by careful breeding; cars and planes by streamlining; health by diet, vitamins and surgery; plants by grafting; people by education. But God will have none of this cobbling. He makes a man better by making him a new man; He imparts a higher order of life and sets to work to destroy the old."

Let us see if it is true that God never employs cobbling. "And he gave some apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4: 11-13). These verses definitely picture growth by steps, an exchanged life resulting from self-transformed living.

Other statements in the same chapter emphasize *self-transformation*: "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." That "*ye put on the new man*," not that Christ puts the new man on for you. And then as a practical example of how the plan works: "Wherefore, putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor" (vs. 22-25). If the foundation of change in the Christian's life is vicarious atonement, why did Paul specify that the liar must *put away lying* to be clean from that sin?

If it be true that God has no use for "cobbling," why the parable of the "vine," (John 15: 1-5)? "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth (or cleans)

it, that it may bring forth *more* fruit." And He also improves His plants by grafting: "For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree. . . " (Rom. 11: 24). This grafting is contrary to nature in the respect that it is natural for the grafted tree to bear the fruit of the scion grafted on it, while in the spiritual the tree, wild by nature, is grafted into the tame olive tree, and bears the fruit of the tree into which it is grafted.

Ephesians 2: 19-22 pictures *growth* as the key to an exchanged life: "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation," (not of vicarious atonement) but "of the apostles and prophets, [their teachings] Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building, fitly framed together *groweth* unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."

Exchanged lives come through efforts at transformation. When Paul said, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new," he did not mean to infer that God makes this change for us with no effort on our part. The liar must quit his lying, the adulterer must cease his adultery, the thief his stealing. To "cleanse his way" the young man must take "heed thereto" according to "God's Word" (Ps. 119: 9). The "wicked" must "forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts" (Isa. 55: 7). If the sinner would be made like Jesus when he sees Him face to face, he must now purify "himself, even as he is pure" (I John 3: 3).

Nor can we agree with the popular viewpoint that God made His Son Jesus to be sin for us, or to bear our sins in the respect that He became responsible for them. The *New Catholic Edition* words II Cor. 5: 21: "For our sakes he made him to be sin who knew nothing of sin, so that in him we might become the justice of God." And in a footnote on v. 21 the following: "so that God suffered Him to be condemned as a sinner, and to die as one accursed." God permitted Him to be condemned as a sinner, but He never made Him to be sin for us. He that justifies the wicked and he that condemns the just are both an abomination to God (Prov. 17: 15), and God would never Himself perform an act which He would abominate in me or you!

The *New English Bible* words II Cor. 5: 21: "Christ was innocent of sin, and yet for our sake God made him one with the sinfulness of men, so that in him we might be made one with the goodness of God himself." Wilson, in his *Emphatic Diaglott* words II Cor. 5: 21: "For him who knew no sin, he made a sin-offering on our behalf that we might become God's righteousness in him." And in a footnote he has this to say: "There are many passages in the Old Testament where *amartia*, sin, signifies a sin-offering. Hosea 4: 8. They (the priests) eat up the sin (sin-offerings) of the people." In the New Testament, likewise, the word *sin* has the same signification. . . "

It was by making a sin-offering each day of His mortal

life after He came to an age of understanding, doing always the things that pleased His heavenly Father, that He merited the position of being the channel through whom all future blessings and eternal salvation will come to His faithful followers. "For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. . . Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. 2: 10; 5: 7-9).



A Hymn of Gratitude

PSALM 92

To render thanks unto the Lord
Is a most comely thing;
And to Thy name, O Thou Most High,
Due praise aloud we sing.

Thy lovingkindness to show forth
When shines the morning light,
And to declare Thy faithfulness
With pleasure every night;

Upon a ten-stringed instrument,
And on the psaltery,
Upon the harp, with solemn sound,
With grave, sweet melody.

How great Thy works, O Lord Most High,
Thy thoughts are very deep!
The senseless cannot understand,
The stupid are asleep!

For though the wicked sprout like grass,
And all wrongdoers thrive,
Forever shall they be destroyed—
No longer to survive.

But like the palm tree, flourishing,
Shall be the righteous one!
He shall like to the cedar grow,
That is in Lebanon.

Those that within the house of God
Are planted by His grace,
Shall e'er grow up, and flourish all,
In God's most holy place.

And in old age, when others fade,
They fruit still forth shall bring;
They shall be fat and full of sap,
In age be flourishing.

To show that upright is the Lord,
He is the Rock to me,
And He from all unrighteousness
Is altogether free.

Sin : Its Sweet Beginning But--Bitter Ending

TWO MEN, touring South America, stopped their car to gaze upon an awe-inspiring scene. In the distance rose the majestic snow-capped mountains. The late afternoon sunset had touched the far-off peaks with shades of rose, purple and gold. It also cast its reflection in the river that flowed peacefully close by. Trees and shrubs grew on the banks and blooming orchids displayed their beauty. From tree to tree, birds of various colors flitted among the lacy foliage. What an ideal place for fishing!

At heart these men were fishermen. The great desire to fish caused them to forget or carelessly disregard the warning given them by the road warden, not to go near the water's edge. The streams in some vicinities were polluted and crocodile-infested. The desire to fish was greater than their concern for their own safety. It was not long and they had their fishing equipment ready and the water jugs, too. Needless to say, the two fishermen never lived to tell the warden that he was right and they were wrong. They had seen only the beauty of the scene around them. They did not see the two crocodiles that lay hidden in among the water lilies. There was sweetness in the beginning but the end was far more bitter.

A Christian is in constant danger of losing his Eternal Life. Amid the many attractive scenes of life, sin is always present to tempt and lure one on to eternal death. We are warned often enough. The Holy Oracles contain numerous admonitions and examples to show us the bitterness of sin's ending. But too often we treat the warnings with the same indifference as did the two travelers. We forget, or we do not think.

We do not have to commit some great sin, such as murder or theft, to experience the bitterness of sin's ending. Partaking of our own ways, small and trivial though they may seem, can prove as fatal to us in the end as the larger sins. When we get our conscience educated and we learn what God calls right and wrong, we find that all sins, great or small, unrepented of, will bring bitterness in the end.

What sweetness is there in having our own way? We know we never felt happier after a spell of anger. Neither does one have that tranquil and glad-to-be-alive feeling when jealous.

We are prone to forget that "Sin has blinding power—sin has binding power." Whenever a temptation takes on the appearance of beauty, let us remember the crocodile that waits in the stream of that desire.

Perhaps no flower holds so much sweetness for the majority of mankind as does self-indulgence. Yet, every time we yield to it, our moral fiber grows the weaker. We are courting the bitterness of the end.

It is only as we live our lives with a definite aim, a lofty goal, and an unswerving purpose, that we shall be privileged to "behold and see the reward of the wicked" but have no part in their bitter ending.

Any time the going seems easier, better check to see if you're not going downhill.

Meditations

On the Word

"When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known" (I Corinthians 13: 11, 12).

The mark of a little mind is its self-satisfaction. The less a man knows, the more he is likely to think he knows, and there is nothing so positive as complete ignorance. On the other hand, the trained and broadened mind finds its horizons expanding much faster than it can follow. The vast reservoir of undiscovered knowledge beckons man on and on.

If consideration of the vast reaches of scientific truth should humble the healthy mind, how much more should contact with the works and thoughts of the Eternal put and keep mere man in his place. At the same time it should whet the appetite of the truth-seeker for more and more of this divine knowledge, and awaken a burning desire and determination to rise, through the workings of God's evolution, to the Fountain-head of all knowledge.

In the simplest matters of life we are in constant touch with infinity, yet with our finite mind we are utterly unable to comprehend it. Because of this limitation, this barrier beyond which the greatest of mortal minds may not pass, much of the revealed Wisdom is of necessity "written down" to the level of our comprehension, just as we explain things to a child in terms which the childish mind can grasp. The things of the future which are beyond all that mortal mind can ask or think or imagine are simply described in figures of speech which common men and women of any and every age can comprehend. But when the barrier is passed and our minds begin to expand in the school of eternity, there is no doubt that many of our present wistful concepts of the eternal realities will be revised as immature and childish, even though now they represent our best.

Saint Paul, who gives us our text for today, possessed a gigantic mind, and his education was good for his day and age. In his younger days he probably thought rather highly of himself, even as you and I. But once the great experience on the Damascus road had jarred him out of his former complacency, his life is one of increasing knowledge, increasing humility, and increasing dissatisfaction, the divine dissatisfaction which made it impossible for him ever to be content with himself, his surroundings, or the mental and physical limitations of his mortal, earth-bound condition.

True, he learned to be content with what he had (Phil. 4: 11), but only as a temporary expedient, and for a purpose. He could endure the present and be happy in it for the sake of the future which he sought. Like many another earnest student, he was willing to deny himself while "working his way through school." His long-range objective was the redemption of his body (Rom. 8: 23; II Cor. 5: 4; Phil. 3: 21), the eternal enlargement of his eager, questing mind. Although a profound reasoner, he well knew that by comparison his knowledge was that of

a child, imperfect, incomplete, but a foundation for something far greater. This realization found expression in glowing terms: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" (Rom. 11: 33).

Although the ancients were expert in the use of colored glass in ceramics, clear glass for windows was practically unknown, the product being very inferior by modern standards; and things seen through such glass would be more or less dim and uncertain. It is more likely, however, that the writer's meaning was "a mirror," as nearly all other translators render it. ("For the present we see things as in a mirror, and are puzzled"—Weymouth.) One does not see reality in a mirror, but only reflections, bright or dim as the case may be. The mirrors of antiquity were of polished metal, and anyone who has used such a mirror will better understand the comparison.

So our Mirror, while it does not tell all, reflects enough for our salvation, all that mortal eyes and minds can comprehend. We will do well to learn and heed what it reveals to us. And there are certain highlights of the grand future which stand out in flashes of brilliant clarity, such as Isaiah 2: 1—4, Zech. 14: 9, and Rev. 21: 3, 4. There is no dimness or mist of obscurity here, but clear glimpses of a few sparkling facets of future glory.

To one man of our Brotherhood the coming wonders will be less of a surprise than to the rest. John the apostle on Patmos saw the curtain lifted and enjoyed in vision a glimpse, brief but unforgettable, of things to come. Some of it he recorded for us, as in the passage referred to above, where the triumph over death, sorrow and pain is complete. But he saw and heard more.

"And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, . . . and he cried with a loud voice . . . and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices. And when the seven thunders uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not" (Rev. 10: 1—4).

The seven thunders—the unrevealed wisdom of God—the secret things which belong unto the Lord (Deut. 29: 29)! What would we not give to live and share that hidden knowledge in the great day when the seventh angel sounds and the mystery of God is finished (Rev. 10: 7).

There are at least three good reasons why the Revelator was not permitted to record these wonders. For one thing, they are not necessary for us in our quest for salvation. The things which are revealed are sufficient for us, and we will do well to live up to the knowledge we have. For another thing, much of this wisdom would be too profound for us to grasp in our present imperfect mental condition. Thirdly, it is not a thing to be given indiscriminately, but as a reward for faithful service. A very important part of it is the secret of immortality. "She [Wisdom] is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her" (Prov. 3: 18). Not natural life, but eternal life. All future life and glory will come through knowledge.

When the Mirror clears in the light of the new Day, when we see face to face with immortal eyes the glory of the Lord (II Cor. 3: 18), then we shall know truth and reality as clearly as the Eternal now knows us. Not all at once, of course; but it will be an evolution, a gradual change and elevation "from glory to glory."

(Continued on page 5).

Questions and Answers



"Will only 144,000 people be saved?"

No, it is God's plan to fill the earth with His glory—righteous people (Num. 14: 21). Revelation 14: 1 lists the one "Lamb," and with Him an hundred forty and four thousand standing on Mt. Zion. They were identified as having no guile in their mouth, and were without fault before God. Revelation 20: 4 identifies this same group of overcomers as "the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, . . . and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." They are to be the "kings and priests" of that new era, and under them will be an ever-expanding populace.

Revelation 7 pictures both classes of people to inhabit the earth during the grand Millennium. Verses 4—8 project the one hundred forty-four thousand, picturing them figuratively as twelve thousand from each of the twelve tribes of Israel. Verses 9—17 picture another group of people to be living at the same time, and they are identified as a "great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues," and they "stood before the throne. . ." While Christ and the 144,000 will be seated on the throne of power, the others will stand before it. They are identified as they that came out after or beyond "the great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood (or Word) of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them." During the Millennium there will be living on earth the 144,000, kings and priests; and in addition a great multitude of subjects working out their salvation, fitting themselves to form the populace of God's eternal kingdom upon earth, which will be fully consummated at the close of the "little season" terminating the thousand-year reign of Christ over the mortal nations of the earth.

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"What do you think on church unity? Do you agree?"

Most churches claim to be built on the Bible, hence they should all believe alike. The hard fact is, however, that such is not the case. The Bible itself demands unity. For example, I Cor. 1: 10: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." These words are all-inclusive, but are not given common ground among the multiplicity of religious factions in the so-called Christian world today, (we say so-called Christian world, for Christ cannot be divided).

The Protestant churches have made some progress toward unity, but they still have a long way to go before they are united. And as for the Catholic and Protestant churches uniting, that prospect seems a long way off.

For a number of churches to get together on the principle that they would take the Bible as the sole authority, and believe and teach only what they can read in it, that would be superb, and all truth-lovers should hail such an accomplishment with unbounded enthusiasm.

"Concerning Angelic Ministration: Who are the angels?"

Angels are real beings, similar in appearance to human beings but designed from vastly different materials. Humans are mortal, angels are immortal. The word *mortal* signifies, that which is subject to death, *immortal* means, that which is not subject to death.

When the angel Gabriel came to Daniel, he touched him, he talked with him, he had heard his prayer. Daniel refers to him as "the *man* Gabriel," and he was caused to fly swiftly to him; and Luke calls him the "angel Gabriel."

When angels came to Abraham (Gen. 18) he recognized them as real men, at least to the extent that he prepared food for them and they ate it. While one foretold the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah the other two went on to hasten Lot from the doomed city, which they later destroyed.

Angels are glorified human beings, the heirs of salvation. The angels that appeared on earth in times past were real people who had worked out their salvation on some other island in space similar to our earth. Jesus promised, "they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead . . . are equal unto the angels, . . . neither can they die any more" (Luke 20: 35, 36). God's plan of salvation has been in operation through all past ages. It has always been a survival of the fittest. The heirs of salvation have been those who proved themselves worthy of perpetuation.

Let us trace the development of an angel through the different stages from a human to an immortal being. Mortal life is given us as a proving ground in which to prove our worth (II Cor. 6: 2). Death ends mortal life and we sleep in the grave (Job 14: 14; 17: 13; 19: 25—27), but our record is safely kept in God's "book of remembrance" (Mal. 3: 16, 17). At the day of Christ's return from heaven there will be a resurrection of the just and the unjust (Acts 24: 15), all covenant-makers must appear before the judgment seat of Christ" (II Cor. 5: 10), "and he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats," setting the sheep upon the right hand and the goats upon the left (Matt. 25: 32, 33). The sheep will be given immortality. Their physical nature will be refined. They will be "changed from glory to glory" (II Cor. 3: 18). "This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality" (I Cor. 15: 53)."

"Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (I Cor. 15: 50). Yet angels are a real substance, a substance which is not corruptible as is flesh and blood. Angels also possess personality. Jesus is said to be in the express image of His Father's person (Heb. 1: 3), hence must have bodily shape, and His faithful followers are to be made like Him, for they shall see Him as He is (I John 3: 2), hence as angels they too will be real beings.

"Some folks flee temptation and then wait around the corner for it to catch up with them."

In any kind of an argument the best weapon to hold is your tongue.

An Evening Reverie

The bright summer days we so loved are now gone,
The flowers have faded, the song-birds have flown;
The autumn sky lowers, with clouds dark and cold;
The trees drop their leaves of brown, crimson and gold;
They tell us that winter is coming apace,
For Time waiteth not in his merciless race.

I sit by the casement, the sun sinking low,
And silently watch the dark clouds as they go,
Like funeral processions, the horizon past,
And dreary and dark are the shadows they cast.
The wind seems to whistle a requiem sad
O'er the flowers of summer, now withered and dead.

I think of the fair sunny days, so soon gone,
Oft idled away in mirth, pleasure and song;
A sad mournful wail seems to sound in my ear
Like rustle of leaves on the earth, brown and sere,--
"The harvest is past, while in pleasure we laved,
The summer is ended, and we are not saved."

O voyager over life's billowy sea,
If calm or if tempest tossed, whiche'er it be,
Redeem the short moments, as onward they glide,
Nor aimlessly drift with the swift rolling tide.
The words of a wise man, from time long ago,
Bring home the stern lesson--You will reap as you sow.

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